



BIBLE STUDY * NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND FEAST OF HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

St. Maria Goretti, St. Peter Claver and St. Augustine Parishes
December 25 and 31, 2017
Volume 2 Issue 5

“So, they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child.” Lk. 2:16-17

Reading I: Isaiah 62: 11-12

I Found What I Was Looking For. I Found the Savior. During the season of Advent we asked the question, “What are you looking for?” Are you looking for love? Are you looking for forgiveness? Are you looking for joy? Are you looking for God’s Favor? On the celebration of the Nativity of our Lord, we can say as the shepherds did, I found what I was looking for. The Lord is with us. I found Jesus.

This is a study of the readings of the Mass at Dawn on Christmas Day. This first reading is from what is called Third Isaiah, (Isaiah Chapters 55 to 66). It was written after the return of the Jews from exile in Babylon. It is filled with words of encouragement for a depressed and almost desperate people. The prophet proclaims that



Come, let us adore Him.

they must trust in God’s promise and pray for its fulfillment. There are great things in store for them. When applied to the birth of Christ, these passages speak of the joy of the new Israel at the advent of its salvation. They speak of the joy of finding what we were looking for. The joy of finding the Savior is universal. The announcement that salvation is coming is not just for Israel, but for the whole world (v. 11). The joy of finding salvation is a joy of holiness, because we were chosen by God to be with Him. Zion is another name for Jerusalem. Its citizens are the Chosen People of God who are called to be Holy. The joy of finding the Savior is a joy of triumph. The Savior comes not as a loser, but as a winner, carrying the prize of His victory over death. The victory is a spiritual one. The joy of finding the Messiah is one of confidence that we have not been forsaken (v. 12). **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** How do you describe your joy this Christmas Season?

Reading II: Titus 3:4-7

I Found What I Was Looking For. I Found The Goodness And Loving-Kindness of God.

Titus, a Gentile, found the loving kindness of God through his conversion to Christianity by St. Paul. He remained a faithful companion of St. Paul and missionary in the church at Crete in Greece. In this letter, St. Paul encourages him to be zealous about spreading the faith he has found by imitating the life of Jesus.

He reminds him that his public and private life should be shaped by the Gospel of Christ by working for justice and a better society (v. 1, See Rom. 13:1-7; CCC. 2238-42). St. Paul encourages meekness and restraint in criticism, since faith is a gift. Without the gift of grace, even our best efforts to serve God fall short of His glory and His plan for us. If we have found Christ, the Messiah, we must show Him to others by the way we live. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** How does your life reflect your faith in Jesus Christ?

Gospel Luke 2:15-20

I Found What I Was Looking For. I Found Jesus the Son of God.

The shepherds responded to the revelation of the angel that the Messiah and Lord was born in Bethlehem (v. 11). Note that the revelation of God’s presence was given to them during their daily routine (v. 8). They responded immediately and left their assigned tasks to find Jesus, the Messiah and Lord (v. 15). Their prompt response was rewarded with the reality of the presence of Jesus in their daily lives.

Note that Mary is placed before Joseph which indicates the primary position of Mary, a woman, in the salvation of the world (v. 16). The presence of Jesus, Mary and Joseph exactly as the angel predicted confirmed for the shepherds that they had done what God expected of them. The gift of God’s presence in their lives was so powerful that they told everyone that the angel said that the child Jesus was the Messiah and Lord. Therefore, if we are to find Jesus, we must be open to God’s messengers. Receive the gift of grace by responding with the obedience of faith. And when we find Jesus, we must show others that we have found Him by the way we live. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** Have you found Jesus the Christ this Christmas?

Gospel Luke 2:22-40

HE IS JUST LIKE US. During this Christmas Season we celebrate the fact that God revealed Himself to the world. Revelation can be defined as God’s communication to humans who He is. In other words, revelation is God’s communication to people about His moral standards and His plan of salvation. Since God is a personal spirit who is distinct from this world, He is absolutely holy and invisible to the view of the sinful mind. One can never create a truth about God. God alone reveals who He is, as He seeks us to bring us closer to Him. Jesus reveals Himself as completely human in these Gospel reading from Luke. The evangelist ends his infancy narrative by revealing that Jesus had very human characteristics. He is God made man. He is just like us.

Because of the number of readings in the Octave of Christmas, this study will focus on the *Gospel for the Feast of the Holy Family*. There are three aspects of this Gospel that show the humanity of Jesus. 1) He comes from a family which is the source of inspiration, example and encouragement. The presentation of Jesus in the temple shows the parents of Jesus as devout Jews, faithful observers of the Law of Moses (Lk. 2:23-24, 39). The Law of Moses (Lv. 12:2-4) required the mother to go through a rite of purification forty days after the birth. The first male child belonged to Yahweh. He too was to be consecrated to the Lord (Ex 13:2, 12) but not necessarily in the temple. Note the similarity in the way Luke describes the family John the Baptist (Lk 1:6), Simeon (Lk 2:25) and Anna (Lk 2:36-37). The Law of Moses was the basis for Jesus’ ministry. Remember, He did not come to destroy the Law of Moses, but to fulfill it.

2) Jesus is just like us, as He had an extended family as represented by Simeon and Anna. As mentioned, they are described as devout and religious people. They represent those around us who wish us well and will intercede spiritually and prayerfully for us. Simeon recognizes Jesus as the “...light to all people” (v. 32). He gives hope to all who were waiting for the Messiah. He sees the spiritual qualities of Jesus and His family and offers prayers in thanksgiving for that revelation. 3) Jesus is like us, as he has people who interpret God’s will for us. Like Miriam (Ex. 15:20), Deborah (Judg. 4:4), and Hulda (2 Kng. 22:14), Anna represents the extended members of our family who help us see God’s will for our lives. Jesus is just like us. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** How do you help your family and extended family to grow spiritually?

Pray About It.

Monday

Read Isaiah 62: 11-12. Call a relative to whom you have not recently spoken.

Tuesday

Visit someone who is sick and shut-in at their residence.

Wednesday

Offer your services to someone in need.

Thursday

Attend Mass and receive the Holy Eucharist.

Friday

Read Luke 2:22-40. Offer words of encouragement to members of your family.

**The Christ – The Messiah
The Catechism of the Catholic Church**

436 The word “Christ” comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Messiah, which means “anointed.” It became the name proper to Jesus only because he accomplished perfectly the divine mission that “Christ” signifies. In effect, in Israel those consecrated to God for a mission that he gave were anointed in his name. This was the case for kings, for priests and, in rare instances, for prophets. This had to be the case all the more so for the Messiah whom God would send to inaugurate his kingdom definitively. It was necessary that the Messiah be anointed by the Spirit of the Lord at once as king and priest, and also as prophet. Jesus fulfilled the messianic hope of Israel in his threefold office of priest, prophet, and king.

Resources: The Gospel of Luke, The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible , Revised Standard Version Second Catholic Edition, Ignatius Press San Francisco CA, 2010; pp 108-111; Titus, Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, Ignatius Press 2010. San Francisco. CA. 2010 pp 406-407; Living Liturgy Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis for Sundays and Solemnities Year B, 2018, Bryan Schmisek, Diana Macalinal, and Jay Cormier, Liturgical Press Collegeville, Mn. pp. 16-19; Liturgical Press Collegeville, Mn. pp. 23-31; Scripture texts in this work are taken from the New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner. <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-The-Sunday-Readings>, Cycle B, Kevin O’Sullivan, O.F.M. Franciscan Herald Press 1971, pp 32-54; Revelation: Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers; Gabriel, Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers

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